AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

1. (currently amended) An exhaust gas processing device for a fuel cell, in which the fuel cell is supplied with air and hydrogen gas to generate electric power, comprising:

a reservoir in communication with a hydrogen outlet of the fuel cell for retaining ~~that retains the~~ hydrogen gas ~~purged~~ exhausted from the fuel cell,

a system for diluting and releasing into atmosphere hydrogen gas retained in the reservoir ~~wherein the hydrogen gas retained in the reservoir is diluted and released into atmosphere even~~ after generation of electric power in the fuel cell is stopped.

2. (currently amended) An exhaust gas processing device according to claim 1, wherein the system for diluting and releasing into atmosphere the hydrogen gas retained in the reservoir comprises a cathode exhaust system for mixing and diluting the hydrogen gas ~~is mixed and diluted~~ with cathode exhaust gas discharged from a cathode of the fuel cell before the hydrogen gas is released into the atmosphere; and

wherein air continues to be supplied to the cathode of the fuel cell so that the hydrogen gas retained in the reservoir is released together with the cathode exhaust gas, after the generation of electric power in the fuel cell is stopped.

3. (original) An exhaust gas processing device according to claim 2, wherein the air continues to be supplied to the cathode of the fuel cell for a specific period of time after the generation of electric power in the fuel cell is stopped; and

wherein the specific period of time expires when a predetermined period of time elapses and/or when a concentration of hydrogen in the reservoir decreases to a predetermined value or smaller.

4. (currently amended) An exhaust gas processing device according to claim 1, wherein the system further ~~comprising~~ comprises:

a hydrogen relief valve ~~that is~~ connected to the reservoir, wherein when the generation of electric power in the fuel cell is stopped, the hydrogen relief valve is opened and air for ventilation of the fuel cell is supplied to a passage connected to the hydrogen relief valve.

5. (original) An exhaust gas processing device according to claim 4, wherein the air for ventilation of the fuel cell continues to be supplied to the passage for a specific period of time after the generation of electric power in the fuel cell is stopped; and

wherein the specific period of time expires when a predetermined period of time elapses and/or when a concentration of hydrogen in the reservoir decreases to a predetermined value or smaller.

6. (original) An exhaust gas processing device according to claim 4, further comprising a hydrogen sensor provided downstream of the passage, to detect a breakdown of the hydrogen relief valve during the generation of electric power in the fuel cell.

7. (currently amended) An exhaust gas processing device for a fuel cell, in which the fuel cell is supplied with air and hydrogen gas to generate electric power and the hydrogen gas discharged from an anode of the fuel cell is recirculated in a hydrogen recirculation piping system, comprising:

a reservoir for retaining ~~in which~~ hydrogen gas purged from the hydrogen recirculation piping system ~~is retained~~;

a cathode exhaust gas pipe ~~that is~~ connected to a cathode of the fuel cell, wherein the cathode exhaust pipe includes ~~and provided with~~ holes for allowing passage of ~~through which~~ the hydrogen gas retained in the reservoir ~~is sucked in~~ into the cathode exhaust pipe ~~so~~ to dilute~~that~~ the hydrogen gas ~~is diluted~~ with cathode exhaust gas in the cathode exhaust pipe and ~~released~~ for releasing the hydrogen gas into atmosphere; and

a blower ~~that~~ for supplying ~~supplies~~ air to the cathode of the fuel cell and ~~forces~~ for forcing the air discharged from the cathode of the fuel cell to flow through the cathode exhaust gas pipe,

wherein the hydrogen gas retained in the reservoir is diluted and released into the atmosphere even after generation of electric power in the fuel cell is stopped.

8. (original) An exhaust gas processing device according to claim 7, wherein the blower continues to supply air to the cathode of the fuel cell to dilute and release the hydrogen gas after the generation of electric power in the fuel cell is stopped.

9. (original) An exhaust gas processing device according to claim 8, wherein the blower continues to supply air to the cathode of the fuel cell for a specific period of time after the generation of electric power in the fuel cell is stopped; and

wherein the specific period of time expires when a predetermined period of time elapses and/or when a concentration of hydrogen in the reservoir decreases to a predetermined value or smaller.

10. (currently amended) An exhaust gas processing device according to claim 7, further comprising:

a hydrogen relief valve ~~that is~~ connected to the reservoir; and

a ventilator ~~that~~ for supplying ~~supplies~~ air for ventilation of the fuel cell, wherein when the generation of electric power in the fuel cell is stopped, the hydrogen relief valve is opened and the ventilator supplies air for ventilation of the fuel cell and forces the air for ventilation of the fuel cell to flow through a passage connected to the hydrogen relief valve.

11. (original) An exhaust gas processing device according to claim 10, wherein the ventilator continues to supply the air for ventilation of the fuel cell to the passage for a specific period of time after the generation of electric power in the fuel cell is stopped; and

wherein the specific period of time expires when a predetermined period of time elapses and/or when a concentration of hydrogen in the reservoir decreases to a predetermined value or smaller.

12. (currently amended) An exhaust gas processing device according to claim 10, further comprising a hydrogen sensor provided downstream of the passage, ~~to~~ for detecting ~~detect~~ a breakdown of the hydrogen relief valve during the generation of electric power in the fuel cell.

13. (NEW) An exhaust gas processing device according to claim 1, wherein the system comprises a blower for supplying air from a cathode in the fuel cell to the reservoir.

14. (NEW) An exhaust gas processing device according to claim 1, wherein the system comprises a ventilator for ventilating the fuel cell.

15. (NEW) A method for processing exhaust gas from a fuel cell, wherein the fuel cell is supplied with air and hydrogen gas to generate electric power, the method comprising the steps of:

discharging hydrogen gas exhausted from the fuel cell to a reservoir;
stopping generation of electric power in the fuel cell;
diluting the hydrogen gas in the reservoir; and
discharging the diluted hydrogen gas from the reservoir.

16. (NEW) The method of claim 15, wherein the step of diluting the hydrogen gas comprises the step of supplying air to the reservoir after stopping generation of electric power.

17. (NEW) The method of claim 16, wherein the step of supplying air to the reservoir comprises supplying air from a cathode of the fuel cell after stopping generation of electric power.

18. (NEW) The method of claim 17, wherein the step of supplying air comprises operating a blower.

19. (NEW) The method of claim 18, wherein the step of operating the blower comprises the step of operating the blower for a predetermined period of time after stopping generation of electric power.

20. (NEW) The method of claim 18, wherein the step of operating the blower comprises the step of operating the blower until a concentration of hydrogen in the reservoir is below a predetermined value.

21. (NEW) The method of claim 15, wherein the step of discharging the diluted hydrogen gas comprises drawing the hydrogen gas through an exhaust port with air from a cathode of the fuel cell.

22. (NEW) The method of claim 15, wherein the step of diluting the hydrogen gas comprises forcing ventilation gas in the fuel cell through a ventilator pipe.

23. (NEW) The method of claim 22, wherein the step of diluting further comprises the step of opening a relief valve between the reservoir and the ventilator pipe to supply the hydrogen gas from the reservoir to the ventilator pipe, such that the hydrogen gas is diluted with ventilation gas in the ventilator pipe.

24. (NEW) The method of claim 23, wherein the step of discharging the diluted hydrogen gas comprises discharging the hydrogen gas and ventilation gas through a ventilation port.